

Getting Started

(Dave Patania: Announcer)

If you're thinking about adding physical activity to your life, sometimes getting started is the hardest part. It seems everyone can come up with an excuse not to be active.

(Woman)

Shoot, I own my own business. At the end of a long day, my feet hurt, and I am just too tired to work out.

(Man)

I got all this practicing to do -- I ain't got time.

(Woman 2)

I think I'll start my exercise after the holidays.

(Man 2)

Who has time when you have kids?

(Dave Patania)

I'm Dave Patania, and I say, no excuses! There are too many ways and too many opportunities for you to spend time each week on physical activities that can improve your health. You can do them indoors or out, at home or at the gym. Pick activities that you enjoy, and break them up to fit your particular schedule. Listen to these folks who, like you, at one time probably had a fistful of excuses.

(Man 3)

About 10 months ago, my wife had a baby, and it was our second child, and I realized that I was 320-some-odd pounds, and I had become very much out of shape, and my knees hurt, my feet hurt, my whole body really hurt. And so I decided that if I was going to be there for them and help those two boys grow into, you know, healthy, well-adjusted young men, that I needed to be in shape, myself. I started slowly with my physical activity routine, and I walked for 45 minutes at a time, three days a week. And gradually, over time, I've increased that to 60 minutes and also added some free weights to what I did -- about 30 minutes, three sessions a week. And -- a light routine, but, nonetheless, consistent. My advice to another person who is getting started would be, just put one foot in front of the other, and do what you can do. Walking, I think, is the most natural thing you can do. It's something that, you know, many of us can do, and it doesn't require any equipment, and it's what your body was created to do. It's the most natural thing to do.

(Woman 3)

Before I started skating, I was in the weakest physical condition of my life. And I knew I needed to be healthier, but traditional exercise just didn't interest me. And I was encouraged to take up a sport where I got joy. I always wanted to skate, but I didn't think I could do it. I would skate once or twice a year, and I'd get too tired. But the thing is, you need practice. And each week, I got stronger and stronger. At first, I just focused on the skating here, and I knew that on my off days from the rink, I needed strength training, so I added that in at home, because I didn't have the money or the time for a gym membership. After about a year of skating, I added in a dog into my life, and we walk every day. And that has helped my cardiovascular strength, and we

have so much fun together. There are recreational leagues in, like, every sport, especially in metro areas. Go online and find something that you love, and take lessons. There's something out there for everyone.

(Man 2)

I was in an automobile accident. I broke my neck and was in ICU for about five weeks and lost more than 70 pounds, so I was 6'3", a little over 110 pounds -- nothing but skin and bone. So I just started trying to rebuild muscle with just little weight workouts every day, and then just slowly started building with the number of weight exercises I would do, and trying to do -- trying to work my abdominals somehow by holding my legs and pulling myself up to do a sit-up, and slowly moved into more cardiovascular workouts by, you know, just going on chair rides, pushing the chair for whatever distance. And as soon as I got the hand cycle, it was pretty easy to make a daily commitment to that. I just really enjoy cycling itself, and I'm motivated, like all humans -- it's a human trait to want to do better and be better and live as healthy a life as possible.

(Woman 4)

It's hard, when you have a lot of kids, to do exercise. I was diagnosed for high blood pressure two years ago. Then I started walking 20 minutes a day. After that, I gradually started walking an hour, with me and my grandkids. Then I started doing it six times a week. I recently added weight and strength training to my routine. I like walking. It made me lose weight and keep my weight under control. Also, when I was walking, that would clear my mind, and then I'd feel better about myself.

(Woman 5)

I was literally a slug. The hardest thing in the world was to take that first step. At 47 years old, I hadn't done anything, so I started slowly and just small steps -- walking in the neighborhood. I couldn't even make it to the end of my community. And now I'm to the point where I really enjoy it, I look forward to it. Two, three times a week, just walking. Anybody can do it. You don't need a gym. You can do this at home, you can do it anywhere. Exercise doesn't have to be a bad word. Now, not only has my energy increased, but my family is really a family. We do this together, and it's wonderful.

(Dave Patania)

Just find an activity you like to do and get started. Believe me, the hardest step is the first one. Many people find that doing activities with their family, friends, or coworkers helps them to get started. Try joining a regular walking group at work, signing up for a team sport, or going to the gym with a friend. Having a support network can help you stick with your program. I've also found that keeping a personal log or journal of your activities is an excellent way to stay committed to being physically active. Write your goals down, mark your activities on a calendar, and keep track of your progress. Okay, before we go any further, let's take a minute to review the guidelines. They say that, for substantial health benefits, the guidelines recommend that most adults get at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, such as brisk walking; or 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity, such as jogging; or an equivalent mix of both moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity each week. In addition to aerobic activities, adult Americans should include at least two days a week

of muscle-strengthening activities. You can get even more health benefits by working your way up to 200 minutes to 300 minutes or more of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week. But if you haven't been active in a while, start out by doing what you can. Once you feel comfortable, slowly add more time and days. Many people's big mistake is to do too much, too fast. Remember, this is not a race. Walking is a great way to add physical activity to your life. Start with a ten-minute brisk walk, twice a day, and if you feel like you can do more, try two 15-minute walks a day. Before you know it, you can be up to 30 minutes a day, five days a week, and that's one way to meet the 150-minute total recommendation for moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week. Now just put in your two days of muscle-strengthening activities that work all seven major muscle groups, and you're meeting all the minimum guidelines. After a couple of months, if you feel ready, instead of doing only moderate-level activities like brisk walking, replace them with more vigorous types of aerobic activity, like jogging. Do what works best for you, but always start with moderate-intensity activities and then add ones that require more vigorous effort little by little. The important thing is to find activities you like to do, so that you'll stick with them. Sometimes getting started is the hardest part of meeting the physical activity guidelines. But all it takes is just a little desire and commitment to take that first step.

I'm Dave Patania.

Please look at our series of videos that can help you get active, healthy, and happy.